



## Maricopa County

### News Release

#### Environmental Services Department

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## Cinco de Mayo – friends, parties and mosquitoes??

It is true. For many Arizonans, Cinco de Mayo marks the beginning of summer – barbecues, pool parties and unfortunately, those pesky little bugs buzzing around your potato salad. Before heading outside, the Maricopa County Departments of Public Health and Environmental Services are reminding people to take precautions against West Nile Virus.

“West Nile Virus is here to stay in Maricopa County and one of the best tools we have against it is to stop the breeding of mosquitos,” said Joy Rich, Maricopa County Assistant Manager.

“This needs to be a community effort, we all need to remember to get rid of any stagnant water around our homes and work with our neighbors to make sure all of the pools are being kept up. It only takes one green pool to create a problem for everyone”, added Rich.

Maricopa County is dedicated to doing its part in preventing the breeding of mosquitos. For months it has been testing mosquito samples, larvaciding and reminding residents about how to protect themselves from West Nile Virus. Through its surveillance, it has already discovered infected mosquitos in the county.

“Although West Nile Virus can be a severe or even deadly illness, you can protect yourself by using insect repellant, and if possible, wearing light colored clothing with long sleeves and pants.” said Dr. Bob England, Acting Director of Maricopa County Public Health Department.

There is no vaccine for West Nile Virus and treatment will only relieve the symptoms of those that contract the disease.

“We have to be mindful that West Nile virus is a permanent health risk in Maricopa County, and this is the time of the year when mosquito activity is in the rise,” said John Power, Interim Director of Maricopa County Environmental Services.

Protect your homes and neighborhoods by eliminating mosquito breeding sites. Be sure to remove standing water and any containers where mosquitoes might breed such as buckets, bird baths, waste tires, and unnecessary clutter.

It is important to protect yourself in order prevent mosquitoes from making you their next meal.

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Wherever you may be this weekend, bring your insect repellent along, and share it with those around you. If you have the opportunity to protect someone else, take it. Your consideration could save lives.

Take these precautions to prevent West Nile virus:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around your property by removing standing water in potted plants, tires, buckets and other containers
- Keep fountains and swimming pools properly operating and free from debris
- Report to Maricopa County stagnant water and green pools
- Repair damaged window and door screens
- Contact Maricopa County for possible WNV infected dead birds drop-off locations
- When outdoors wear long sleeves and long pants to prevent mosquito bites
- Avoid outdoor activity before dawn and after dusk when mosquitoes are most active
- When outdoors wear a mosquito repellent (follow label instructions, especially for use on children)

So far this year, Maricopa County Department of Public Health has not received any laboratory-confirmation of human cases of West Nile Virus infection. Last year, Maricopa County had 79 confirmed West Nile Virus cases, and 4 deaths.

For more information on West Nile virus, as well as for WNV dead bird drop-off locations, to report green pools or file any mosquito related complaint, and for WNV materials or presentations for your group/organization, call (602) 506-0700 or visit [www.maricopa.gov/wnv](http://www.maricopa.gov/wnv)

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